

LIFE EXPECTANCY

The overall life expectancy of a baby born in 2008 was 77.8 years (data not shown); this varied, however, by sex and race. A baby girl born in the United States in 2008 could expect to live 80.3 years, 5.0 years longer than a baby boy, whose life expectancy would be 75.3 years (data not shown). The differential between male and female life expectancy was greater among Blacks than Whites. Black males born in 2008 could expect to live 70.2 years, 6.6 years fewer than Black females (76.8 years). The difference between White males and females was 4.9 years, with life expectancies at birth of 75.7 and 80.6 years, respectively. White females could expect to live 3.8 years longer than Black females. The lower life expectancy among Blacks may be partly accounted for by higher infant mortality rates, as well as higher mortality rates throughout the lifespan.¹⁰

Life expectancy has increased since 1970 for males and females in both racial groups. Between 1970 and 2008, White males' life expectancy increased from 68.0 to 75.7 years (11.3 percent), while White females' life expectancy increased from 75.6 to 80.6 years (6.6 percent). During the same period, the life expectancy for Black males increased from 60.0 to 70.2 years (17.0 percent), while life expectancy increased from 68.3 to 76.8 years (12.4 percent) for Black females. Between 1970 and 2008, the greater

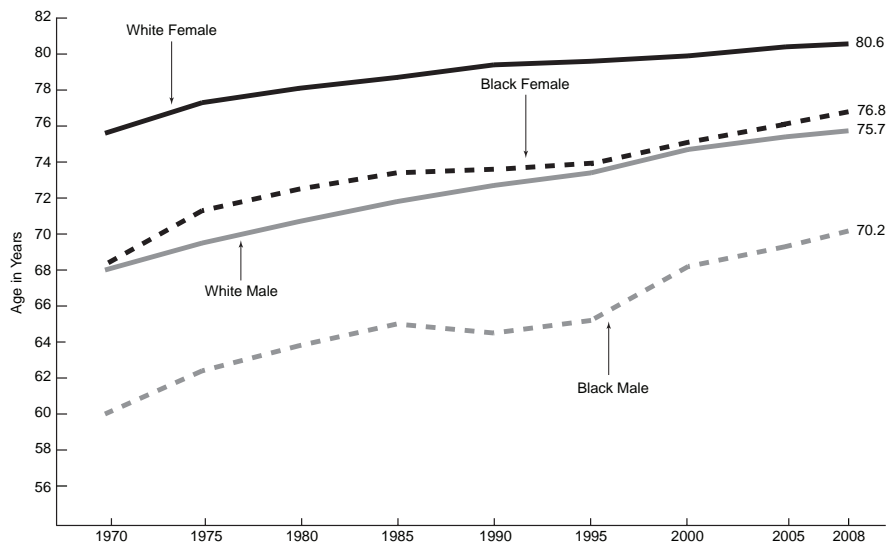
gains in life expectancy for males than females and for Blacks than Whites have led to reduced disparities by sex and race.

While life expectancy estimates have not historically been calculated and reported for the Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and multiple race populations, the U.S. Census Bureau has calculated projected life expectancies for these groups. Among females born in

2010, those who are Hispanic are projected to have the longest life expectancy (83.7 years) followed by those of multiple races (81.7 years), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (81.6 years), American Indian/Alaska Natives (81.5 years), and Asians (81.1 years). In comparison, non-Hispanic White females born in 2010 are projected to live 81.1 years (data not shown). Males of every race are projected to have a shorter life expectancy than their female counterparts.¹¹

Life Expectancy at Birth, by Race* and Sex, 1970–2008**

Source II.4: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System



*Both racial categories include Hispanics. **2008 data are preliminary.